

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1-6, 11 and 12 are again rejected. Claims 7-10 are again objected to but would be allowable if placed into independent form. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowability. However, on the basis of the amendment to claim 1 that adopts the Examiner's suggestion, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the present claims define over the cited art, as subsequently presented.

Finally, Applicant appreciates the courtesy extended by Examiner Siconolfi, in substituting for Examiner Torres at the last minute, to consider and comment on the proposed amendment in a telephone call on March 28, 2006. No agreement was reached and the Examiner noted that he would consider the amendment and offer suggestions as appropriate, once it was considered.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-6, 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being unpatentable over Berwanger (WO-03/021 126 or US - Patent No. 6,752,248) in view of Battig (6,155,720). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

The Examiner repeats the grounds for rejection of claims 1-6, 11 and 12. The Examiner comments at page 3, paragraph 4, asserts that the Applicants' arguments are moot since they do not consider the combination with Battig. The Examiner notes Applicants' arguments that the two axes are perpendicular to one another, but observes that the claim language does not require that the axes are perpendicular or orthogonal to one another. The Examiner interprets the two axes as being perpendicular to the axis of the axle.

First, this interpretation is not reasonable since the disclosure of this feature at page 9, lines 14-22 of the present specification and Fig. 2 clearly teach that the two "orthogonal" axes OX, OY shown in Figure 2 are orthogonal with respect to one another.

Second, for all of the reasons previously given, Berwanger's deficiencies are significant and Battig does not remedy them. Indeed, the Examiner already recognized that "Berwanger fails to teach an arrangement wherein the centering bearing has structural characteristics generating different bearing stiffnesses along two orthogonal axes contained in a plane that is

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perpendicular to the axis of the axle" (see the Non-Final Office Action dated July 13, 2005, bottom lines of Page 2). Applicants previous arguments with respect to Battig clearly show that the two stiffnesses along the vertical axis and the horizontal axis (then two axes that are orthogonal with respect to one another) in a plane that is perpendicular to the axis of shaft or axle 1 (the plane of the drawing) are basically identical. Since neither Berwanger nor Battig teaches such main feature, obviously the combination of these two references does not teach it either.

Moreover, Applicants again respectfully submit that the two references are not combinable. This significant argument has not been addressed by the Examiner.

Nonetheless, in order to advance prosecution, Applicants are prepared to further clarify that the two axes are perpendicular or orthogonal to each other. An appropriate amendment has been made to claim 1 in this regard.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

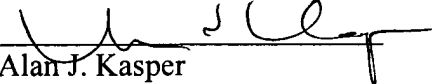
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